

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers July 7, 2004

### NETS Feature

#### **North America Conference on ELDERLY MOBILITY (NACEM)**

NACEM is hosted by the Michigan Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission and will take place September 12-15, 2004 at the Marriott Renaissance Center- Detroit, Michigan. This conference will include best practices in the areas of Vehicle and Roadway Design, Screening and Assessment, Education and Training, Health and Medicine, Housing and Land Use, and Alternative Transportation presentations from eight countries and 11 states. For additional information call (517) 663-5147 or e-mail [DMSdiane@concentric.net](mailto:DMSdiane@concentric.net). For a full registration brochure visit conference partner, Traffic Improvement Association's website at: [www.tiami.org](http://www.tiami.org)

#### **DaimlerChrysler Protecting Our Teens**

Vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens and research shows that when parents take an active role in their teens' driving education and set certain driving guidelines, their teens' chances of being in a crash can be reduced by up to one-third. To address these serious issues, DaimlerChrysler created an online *Road Ready StreetWise video game*. *Road Ready Teens* offers a simple set of steps for parents to implement in the home to help ease teens into driving. Log on to [www.roadreadyteens.org](http://www.roadreadyteens.org) to find links to Michigan's driving laws, research and statistics, and information on safer driving including this unique video game.

#### **OSHA Supports DSWW 2004**

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health John Henshaw announced the launch of Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW) 2004 at last week's American Society of Safety Engineers' Professional Development Conference, recognizing the DSWW campaign as a strategy to reduce traffic-related deaths. More---- [http://www.netsnational.org/newsletter/6\\_15\\_04a.asp](http://www.netsnational.org/newsletter/6_15_04a.asp)

#### **The Risks of Tailgating**

When the car in front of us is traveling slower than we want to go, most of us get closer than we probably should. Commonly referred to as "tailgating," this behavior is riskier than many drivers think. More: [http://www.netsnational.org/newsletter/7\\_1\\_04a.asp](http://www.netsnational.org/newsletter/7_1_04a.asp)

### Latest Traffic Safety News

#### **Road Debris Causes 25,000 Crashes a Year**

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety recently reported that debris on roadways cause 25,000 crashes and up to 90 deaths a year in the United States and Canada. The Foundation concluded that debris-related crashes could be avoided if truckers and motorists secure their loads properly and report debris they encounter on the road. View the full article at [http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedia/presentations/VRRD\\_files/v3\\_document.htm](http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedia/presentations/VRRD_files/v3_document.htm)

### **GPS More Affordable for Small Businesses**

Although once considered an expensive tool for big-budget mobile fleets, global positioning systems (GPS) are quickly catching on as an affordable option for small businesses. Originally developed for military use, GPS systems have since been used to locate commercial fleet vehicles, such as taxis and trucks. Now, with the development of relatively low-cost GPS tools, such as GPS-equipped cell phones, any business can monitor and track their employees. View the full article at

<http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20040623.wgpss0623/BNStory/Technology/>

### **TRB Releases Guide Reducing Crashes Involving Older Drivers**

The Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 500 recently released Volume 9 of the Guidance for Implementation of the AASHTO Strategic Plan entitled A Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Older Drivers. The guide provides strategies that can be employed to reduce the number of collisions involving older drivers. The overall objective of this research is to develop and validate guidance documents to assist state and local agencies with reducing fatalities in targeted areas. View the guide at

[http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp\\_rpt\\_500v9.pdf](http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_500v9.pdf)

### **Ohio Strengthens Work Zone Vehicular Homicide Law**

Ohio drivers who cause a death or injury within a work zone will now be subject to mandatory jail time. Ohio officials have also lengthened the sentences for aggravated vehicular homicide if the victim is a law enforcement officer or if the driver has three previous drunk driving convictions. In 2003, 6,500 crashes occurred in Ohio work zones killing 24 people and injuring 1,500. For more information visit

<http://www.onnnews.com/Global/story.asp?S=1910174>

### **SAAB Developing Car Key Breathalyzer**

The Swedish carmaker is considering selling car keys with a miniature built-in Breathalyzer that would shut down the engine if the driver had more to drink than the legal limit. The "Alcokey" is equipped with a small mouthpiece the size of a pinhead in which the driver must blow to determine an alcohol level. Saab anticipates the concept to sell well in Europe, where corporate fleets are common and notes that Americans with young drivers might also be interested in Alcokey. While it is still under development, the Alcokey is expected to arrive on the market within a few years and cost about \$300. For more information visit

<http://www.autonews.com/news.cms?newsId=9053> or view the release at <http://www.saabusa.com/main/US/en/pressreleases.xml?id=1&type=recent>

### **Wireless Technology Connecting Phones and Cars**

This wireless technology, known as "Bluetooth," uses short-wave radio to connect cell phones to cars without cables. With a Bluetooth-enabled phone, the car automatically recognizes the phone and takes the call over when the driver gets in, letting the driver go hands-free. If driving, the car responds with voice activation and acts like the phone. You can call out or answer a call as long as the cell phone itself is anywhere in the car — even the trunk.

### **Innovation Driving Automakers**

According to an article in the Detroit Free Press, automakers are registering for hundreds of patents each year in a race to make vehicles better, faster, cheaper, safer, and less harmful to the environment. Inventions that have begun trickling onto the market include a handheld GPS device that can locate a vehicle in a parking lot and an alarm that senses drowsy driving. The article reports that the automaker with the edge will likely maintain a lead, but only temporarily. Read the full article at

[http://www.freep.com/money/autonews/patent14\\_20040614.htm](http://www.freep.com/money/autonews/patent14_20040614.htm)

### **GM, US Army Join Forces to Reduce Crashes Involving Soldiers**

General Motors Corp. and the U.S. Army are teaming up to help reduce the number of crashes involving soldiers in their personal cars and trucks. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 202 service members died in private automobile crashes in 2003, and 69 of the deaths involved Army personnel. The effort includes advanced driver training that can be duplicated on Army bases and a 45-minute safe-driving video that will be required viewing for all Army personnel. Last year, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld challenged all branches of the military to cut the rate of preventable accidents and fatalities, including traffic deaths, by at least 50 percent by 2005.

### **In-Car Geotechnology On The Rise**

In-vehicle geotechnology or location tracking and sensing technologies are quickly moving into the mainstream. Four geotechnology systems include the Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation system, the laser-guided cruise control, the "smart key," and the reversing system. All four of these systems rely on their ability to constantly determine and analyze the relative location of other objects and adjust the car's operation. For more information on these systems visit

<http://www.geoplace.com/gw/2004/0406/0406tect.asp>

### **Federal Regulators Find Countdown Traffic Signals Unsafe**

According to the latest version of a federal manual, the city of Boulder, Colorado will not be able to make full use countdown pedestrian traffic signals, which mark the number of seconds remaining before the light changes, because of potential safety problems. Regulators are concerned that safety problems could arise because of countdown inaccuracies or during unusual circumstances, such as a fire truck bearing down on an intersection. The manual states that the countdown will be visible only in the final 10 seconds. Read the full article at

[http://www.bouldernews.com/bdc/editorials/article/0,1713,BDC\\_2489\\_%202988542,00.html](http://www.bouldernews.com/bdc/editorials/article/0,1713,BDC_2489_%202988542,00.html)

### **'Driving While Impaired' Satellite Broadcast Aairs on July 21**

On Wednesday, July 21, 2003 at 1:00 pm EST, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) will broadcast "Driving While Impaired" to provide an overview of the impaired driving issue, share the latest NHTSA initiatives and most current laws, and how community coalitions can help prevent impaired driving. Currently, NHTSA offers the "Toolkit for Impaired Driving," which provides basic facts, ways to evaluate the problem, and successful community initiatives. Order the kit at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/outreach/media/catalog/Index.cfm>. For broadcast registration information visit <http://cadca.org/calendar/date.asp?date=7/21/2004>. The broadcast will also be webcast live at [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org) and [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

### **News from USDOT**

#### **Mineta Announces \$47.8 Million in Incentive Grants to 47 States**

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta announced incentive grants totaling \$47.8 million to 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico for improving highway safety by lowering the legal threshold for impaired driving to .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Colorado, Delaware, and Minnesota did not have .08 BAC laws in place and had 2 percent of their federal highway construction funds withheld as of October 1, 2003. The penalty for not complying with the law increases in 2 percent increments each year to a maximum of 8 percent in 2007 and continues at that rate annually thereafter. Colorado and Minnesota have since enacted .08 laws. Read the news release at

<http://www.dot.gov/affairs/nhtsa2804.htm>. For a list of states and jurisdictions and the amounts of funding they received visit <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/nhtsa2804.htm>

### **GAO Report Examines Rural Road Safety**

Entitled Federal and State Efforts To Address Rural Road Safety Challenges, the report found that delays in medical care of crash victims on rural highways is a contributing factor to rural fatalities. Data for 2002 shows that for 30 percent of fatal crashes on rural highways, victims did not reach a hospital within one hour of the crash, while only 8 percent of victims in fatal urban crashes did not reach a hospital within one hour. Similarly, a recent NHTSA report found that rural Americans are more likely to be injured or killed in traffic crashes than those who live and commute in urban areas. According to NHTSA, the motor vehicle fatality rate in rural areas is more than double the fatality rate in urban areas. More than twice as many 15-20 year-olds died in rural area crashes compared to urban crashes in 2002. In addition, 62 percent of occupants in this age group were unrestrained compared to 55 percent in urban areas. View the full GAO report at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04663.pdf>

View the full NHTSA reports at

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/BUASBRuralWeb/images/SBs&Rrll%20Comments.pdf>

### **Technology To Prevent Lane Departure Crashes**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "unintended lane departure" is the single-largest cause of the automotive highway fatalities in the United States. NHTSA reports that more than 43 percent of all fatal crashes reported in 2001 involved a vehicle drifting out of its lane or off the road. Today automakers are developing lane departure warning systems to prevent these crashes. For more information visit

[http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=11928889&BRD=1847&PAG=461&dept\\_id=359925&rft=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=11928889&BRD=1847&PAG=461&dept_id=359925&rft=6)

### **NHTSA Hosting Forward Lighting Systems Workshop**

NHTSA will conduct a technical workshop on July 13 in Washington, D.C. to discuss safety-related metrics for evaluating forward lighting systems. Automotive lighting, vision, and safety experts will present their views on the development of safety-related metrics to improve nighttime driving safety and mobility by evaluating the tradeoff between glare and visibility. For more information visit

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/meetings/MeetDisplay.cfm?RecID=13>

### **Left-Hand Turns Pose Great Risk for Aging Drivers**

NHTSA recently studied four contributing factors of crashes involving older drivers including left-hand turns, fragility, illness, and perceptual lapses. The findings were based on 25 years of data from 1975 to 1999 and analyzed 4 million crashes that involved injuries. For more information read the article at [https://registration.realcities.com/reg/toolbar.do?dispatch=login&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.philly.com%2Fmld%2Finquirer%2Fnews%2Flocal%2Fstates%2Fpennsylvania%2Fcities\\_and\\_neighborhoods%2Fmain\\_line%2F8895537.htm](https://registration.realcities.com/reg/toolbar.do?dispatch=login&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.philly.com%2Fmld%2Finquirer%2Fnews%2Flocal%2Fstates%2Fpennsylvania%2Fcities_and_neighborhoods%2Fmain_line%2F8895537.htm)

## **International Traffic Safety News:**

### **Can Flying a Flag on Your Car Reduce Aggressive Driving?**

Flying a flag on cars has been the source of much debate in the UK. Safety experts claim that flying a flag on a vehicle is dangerous and violates the Road Traffic Act of 1998, which says that motorists who obscure vehicle windows are liable for a fine or points on their license. Yet, recently the RAC Foundation rejected these claims and asserted that drivers safely flying a flag show a better sense of pride in themselves, their vehicle, and their country. Furthermore, the Foundation states that there is



evidence that flag fliers let others pull out and are more forgiving of other drivers who make a mistake while driving; thereby reducing roadway aggression.

### **UK Police Fleet Uses Point System, Record Keeping to Reduce Crash Rate**

Despite a 22 percent increase in fleet size, Thames Valley Police (TVP) reduced its crash rate over the last year five-year period by implementing a driver point system and maintaining extensive driver records on their 10,000 employees. Each driver is issued a driver permit, which is marked with points if a driver has a crash in a company vehicle. The data is entered into the system, which is able to benchmark performance, manage and print driver costs, and analyze costs. TVP found that drivers with a number of minor crashes are at a greater risk of being involved in a serious crash. The record system is able to identify at-risk drivers and organize proper training. If a driver accrues 12 points within 3 years, he or she will be unable to drive a police vehicle for six months.

### **UK Business 'Not Affected' By Cell Phone Laws**

According to Transport Research Laboratory, laws banning the use of handheld mobile phones in cars are not affecting the productivity of UK companies. However, when drivers were using their handheld phones, research indicated that their braking distance increased.

### **In-Vehicle Tracking Devices Raise Privacy Issues in Canada**

Recently, "black box" technology was credited with helping to convict a Canadian driver for striking and killing a college student in Montreal. Yet, the conviction has stirred concern among privacy advocates, who contend that this type of "surveillance technology" has the potential to invade one's privacy, and instead of helping drivers, the technology can also be used against them. It is estimated that by the year 2008 more than 40 percent of new vehicles in the United States will have some form of telematics—such as "black box," tracking technology. View the full article at <http://www.canada.com/montreal/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=ed421064-ed14-42f7-8c2f-23de68d88ffe>

### **UK Report: Cameras Save 100 Lives a Year**

The report, released by the UK Department for Transportation, found that the number of people killed or seriously injured at sites where safety cameras are in use has fallen by an average of 40 percent, which equates to more than 100 fewer deaths a year. View the press release at [http://www.dft.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2004\\_0067](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2004_0067)

### **RoSPA Announces New Action Plan**

In reaction to government figures showing the highest number of road deaths in six years, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has issued a six-point action plan to help reduce traffic fatalities. Deaths rose from 3,431 in 2002 to 3,508 last year, an increase of 2 percent. The action plan focuses on motorcycle training, impaired driving, increased employer and law enforcement involvement, as well as on-going driver training.

### **Toronto Study: Red-light Cameras Cut Injuries**

A new study conducted by the City of Toronto analyzing 38 intersections with red-light cameras found that injuries plunged and fatalities were reduced after the program began in 2000. The year before the cameras, the 38 intersections accumulated 556 injuries and 1.8 deaths. After the installation of the cameras, injuries dropped to 455 and deaths dropped to 1.5. Read the article at [http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article\\_Type1&c=Article&cid=1087942211067&call\\_pageid=968350130169&col=969483202845&tacodalugin=no](http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&cid=1087942211067&call_pageid=968350130169&col=969483202845&tacodalugin=no)



According to a recent Chrysler Group and Harris Interactive survey, two-thirds of parents name the family vehicle as a convenient place to have a meaningful conversation with their children. The survey also found that families spend an average of 1.3 hours in the car everyday and take approximately 5.3 road trips per year, using this time to talk to their children about school, friends, and values. Read more about the survey at [http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/040624/deth013\\_1.html](http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/040624/deth013_1.html)

#### **Dad Becomes Teen's Personal 'OnStar' Service**

A New Jersey dad used the Internet and maps to track his teenaged daughter's road trip from college in Tucson, Arizona to home in Princeton, New Jersey. Arming his daughter with a cell phone headset, a U.S. map with the route home marked in yellow, and a list of rules, "Daddy OnStar" set up camp at home complete with maps, phones, and a laptop with a wireless web connection. Like the satellite service available in GM vehicles, this dad was standing by 24/7 to pinpoint locales, list available services, check distances, and dispatch help in case of trouble. Read the complete article at <http://www.time.com/time/generations/article/0,9171,1101040628-655410,00.html>